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American School
of Classical Studies
at Athens

A ROMAN BUILDING IN CORINTH

A REPORT OF THE EXCAVATIONS OF 1896: TRENCH XIV

[PLATES XXV, XXVI]

OF the group of cuttings known as Trench XIV, northeast of the present *áγopa* of Palaikórinthos, the principal trench was dug in order to explore a heavy buttressed wall which runs from east to west along the south side of a modern road of the same direction. From the western part of this trench another trench was run southward at right angles with it. In the road itself several small cuttings were made, in order to ascertain whether there were remains of any ancient road under the present one, and, if so, whether that road was intersected in the immediate vicinity of the wall by a road from the south.

The existence of a massive wall beneath the surface of the ground had been observed early in the campaign, but the work of laying it bare was not begun until the second week in May. The task was entrusted to Mr. Andrews, who uncovered the greater part of the explored portion of the wall, and made the cuttings in the road.¹ The remainder of the explored portion of the wall was laid bare by Dr. Babbitt, who also supervised the excavation of the first half of the south intersecting trench.

The part of the wall exposed lies about 0.20 m. (at the third buttress, reckoning from the east) to 1.95 m. (at the eighth buttress) beneath the surface of the ground, according to

¹ Mr. Andrews also prepared the sketch upon which is based that part of the plan of Trench XIV that covers the excavations conducted by him.

the number of courses preserved. It extends in a direction varying from east and west toward southeast and northwest by about 5° (in this respect resembling the east and west walls of Trench IX), from a point 4.75 m. east of the modern road to the *ἀγορά*, into a field south of the east and west road before mentioned, for a distance of 49.33 m. The entire length of the wall was not ascertained, for, toward the east the excavation had to be discontinued on account of a house, and, toward the west, at a depth of 1.90 m., a bed of hard concrete, 0.15 m. to 0.25 m. in thickness, impeded farther operations, although the trench was carried over it a distance of 11.05 m., in the hope that it would terminate. The width of the simple wall at points 30.48 m., 10 m., and 5.30 m. from the west end was found to be 1.22 m., 1.41 m., and 1.45 m. respectively.

The wall is reinforced on the north side at intervals of 3.51 m. to 3.60 m. (average 3.548 m.) by exterior buttresses, which have an outward projection of 0.58 to 0.63 m. (average 0.614 m.), and a width of 1.15 to 1.185 m. (average 1.175 m.), except at the east end, where there was found a stone 1.98 m. in width, which was thought to lie under a corner buttress (cf. PLATE XXV, Plan and Elevation I). West of this there is a space of 13.67 m., in which, owing to the difficulties of tearing up a much-used thoroughfare, the wall was not excavated, and consequently the position and width of the buttresses are not known. It may, however, be conjectured, on the basis of the above-mentioned average widths and interspaces, that the interval was occupied by three buttresses—we have the western profile of the one farthest west—and three interspaces. If the wide stone previously mentioned represents the width of a corner buttress, then the interspace nearest the corner may be estimated at 3.049 m., the others at 3.548 m. each. Instances of unequal interspacing between buttresses and between interior braces are not uncommon. An example of smaller interspaces near a corner may be seen at the southeast angle of the supporting wall of the terrace of the Olympieum at Athens. Here we have on the east side inter-

spaces of 4.58 m., 4.58 m., 5.73 m., 5.46 m., and 5.64 m., respectively, beginning with the one nearest the corner, and on the south side, commencing with the same corner, interspaces of 4.90 m. and 4.30 m., followed by seven others ranging from 5.38 m. to 5.78 m. in length. If, however, this stone lay beneath an ordinary buttress, there is room for equal interspaces, provided the buttress were set 0.499 m. east of the west edge of the stone. We should then have all together ten buttresses; an eleventh might doubtless be added, were it not for a tongue of concrete that hides the north face of the wall to within 3.20 m. of the westernmost buttress. For view of the wall, showing buttresses III-VII, see PLATE XXVI.

Wall and buttresses are constructed of large quadrangular blocks of the soft whitish limestone, which in Corinth corresponds to Piraeus stone at Athens, laid in mortar. The first course above the level of the street, 0.35 m. in height, extends just beyond the exterior buttress-line, thus forming a sort of water-table. The remaining courses are two layers thick; when a buttress occurs, it forms a third layer. What then becomes the middle layer is, in the case of the eighth or westernmost buttress, for the sake of economy, filled in with smaller stones and plaster, forming a kind of coarse concrete, and, in the case of the third buttress, left empty. The width of the layers is, in the eighth buttress, 0.78 m., 0.65 m., and 0.62 m., respectively, beginning with the outside layer. The individual blocks are of various lengths; examples ranging from 0.25 m. to 1.29 m. were noted (cf. PLATE XXV, Elevation II). The height of the layers is, in the case of the eighth buttress, substantially the same, namely, 0.65 m., 0.68 m., and 0.70 m., respectively, from the outside. As to the height of the courses, a comprehensive statement cannot yet be made, the excavation having been merely tentative, but an idea of the appearance of a relatively well preserved portion of the façade may be obtained from a glance at the elevation of the third buttress, with a bit of wall at either side (PLATE XXV, Elevation II). Here the height of the first course of the wall

proper is 1.14 m., while the second and third courses are each only about half as high. In this respect the wall is somewhat like the east wall of the so-called Gymnasium of Hadrian at Athens. In this the second course above the present level of the ground is 1.02 m. high, the third 0.43 m., the fourth 0.73 m., and the others about the same as the fourth.

The cuttings on the road north of the wall brought to light, at a depth of about 2.60 m., an ancient street, 5.015 m. in width, running east and west, at its base. The pavement of this street, consisting of large irregularly polygonal blocks of hard, whitish limestone, was worn into deep ruts at 0.25 m., 0.91 m., and 2.31 m., respectively, from the wall. In all of these ruts the pavement, which, in the case of the last, is 0.25 m. thick, had been worn through, and then repaired with pebbles cemented in. Shallow ruts were found at 2.96 m. and 3.71 m. distance from the wall. A modern water-conduit rendered it impracticable to excavate in this place to the entire width of the street, but a little farther east, where the north side of the street was exposed, a shallow rut was found, 4.56 m. distant from the wall. Only one other rut was met with here, and that an insignificant one about 4 m. from the wall, as only a narrow strip of the street was excavated. At the east end of the trench, where, with the exception of a few inches, the entire width of the street was laid bare, no ruts were found on account of the badly disintegrated state of the pavement. Owing to this disintegration, however, a glimpse was obtained of three tile drains crossing the street at different angles beneath the pavement.

The north side of the street at these cuttings was found to be bordered by two bits of low broken wall. The eastern piece is 1.40 m. long, the other 4.10 m. long and 0.65 m. wide. They probably belong together, but there is between them a space of 1.50 m. which was only partially excavated. Through the longer piece an opening 0.90 m. wide has been made a little east of the centre, as though for a door or passage (cf. PLATE XXV, plan).

Inside of the wall, at a level with the pavement outside, a fairly good Roman mosaic was discovered. Except for a strip 1.10 m. in width, at the south side next to the wall, it was badly broken up, but evidently covered, originally, a space at least 3.34 m. in width from south to north.

The ruined state of the greater part of the mosaic made it possible to dig to a greater depth north of the preserved portion. Here was discovered a drain 1 m. in height, which seemed to have been sunk through the mosaic. The bottom of this drain, constructed of rounded tile, lies 1.40 m. below the mosaic. The top was covered with slabs of soft white limestone. About on a level with the mosaic a second drain, of inferior character, was found, running at right angles to the first, and with a fall from south to north.

As these cuttings in the road were opposite the buttress-wall, no intersecting north and south street was found. A small cutting, however, was made in the road about 12.50 m. west of the western end of the main trench, with the hope of finding the north and south pavement, that had appeared in Trenches III and VI-X, but, owing to various unfortunate obstructions, it was abandoned before a sufficient depth had been reached.

Thus far the excavation had shown the existence of a carefully constructed Roman wall of unusual massiveness and solidity, alongside a thoroughfare, which had evidently been the scene of much traffic. In order to ascertain the character of the remains immediately back of this wall, a trench was dug southward at right angles with it, starting from the eighth buttress. The length of this trench was 22.50 m. The width at the top, for the first 12.90 m., was 2 m.; for the remainder it gradually increased to 3.40 m. The greatest depth was 6.70 m. The wider south end, from the southernmost cross-wall, was about 2.20 m. in depth. In this trench were found walls and drains of various periods. We will note first the walls, taking them up in order from north to south.

About 0.55 m. south of the buttress-wall was found, at a

depth of 0.15 m. from the surface, a wall, 0.65 m. wide and 1.50 m. high, rudely constructed of rough stone and brick laid in mortar. It evidently has nothing to do with the buttress-wall, with which it is not even quite parallel, but is of much later date — probably mediaeval or modern. Beneath this wall was found a broken ledge of *opus incertum*, 1 m. in thickness, projecting southward about 0.40 m. from the south side of the wall in the form of a truncated cone (cf. PLATE XXV, Section I). Underneath this was a vertical wall of brick, 0.50 m. high, backed by *opus incertum*. The south side of this wall lies about 1.20 m. back of the inner side of the buttress-wall. Immediately beneath this brick-work is a layer or shelf of concrete, which projects 0.50 m. beyond it. The total width of this layer is 0.75 m., the thickness 0.25 m. That the low vaulted passage or conduit thus formed belongs with the outer wall seems likely from the fact that the intervening space, so far as could be ascertained, was filled in with *opus incertum*, and also from the fact that the wall does not extend farther down than the above-mentioned shelf of concrete, as a crowbar-hole, extending northward 1.85 m. from the north edge of the shelf, revealed only rubble and broken blocks of *poros* stone. The combination of outside wall of stone and lining of *opus incertum*, faced on the inside with brick, may also be seen in the so-called Gymnasium of Hadrian before referred to.

At 7.10 m. distance from the buttress-wall, and parallel with it, a second cross-wall was found, at a depth of 2.20 m. This wall is substantially constructed of irregularly shaped blocks of *poros* stone, both worked and unworked, and a small proportion of tile, laid in mortar. The height of the wall, as far as preserved, is 1.97 m., its width 0.90 m., and its exposed length about 1.20 m. The depth and solid construction of this wall make it probable that it goes back as far as the Roman period. It does not, however, appear to belong to the same period as the buttress-wall and the walls next to be described.

The third cross-wall, 11.80 m. south of the buttress-wall, lies 1 m. deep beneath the surface. Another wall, which lay on top

of it and extended to within 0.15 m. of the present level of the soil, was purposely broken away in the excavation, as it was manifestly of a very late period. It was constructed of small stones, tile, and coarse plaster, and had a width of 0.65 m., thus corresponding in character closely with the first cross-wall described above. The width of the under wall is 1 m., its height 4.40 to 4.55 m., and its exposed length 1.80 m.

This wall is constructed of concrete poured, in a liquid state, into a framework of boards fastened to upright scantling after the usual Roman manner. It is a coarse concrete with a considerable proportion of mortar, a fact which causes the outer surface to look as though roughly plastered. The imprint of the boards of the framework is still plainly visible. They were 0.24 to 0.30 m. in width. On the north side may also be seen the imprint of one piece of the scantling, 0.15 m. wide, 0.07 m. deep, and 1.70 m. in length. As the lower end of this timber extends only to within 1.31 m. of the bottom of the wall, it would appear that this was an intermediate piece, inserted for the purpose of holding the boards more firmly in position. On the south side of the wall there remain two similar impressions, one of which is 0.23 m. from the angle which this wall makes with the north and south wall next to be described; the other is separated from the first by a space of 1.165 m. These timbers were 0.14 and 0.15 m. wide, respectively, and 0.06 and 0.09 m. deep. The lengths were not ascertained owing to the before-mentioned shallowness of the trench on this side of the wall. In the upper part of the wall the concrete presents a rougher surface. On the north side the construction just described is capped by a sort of rude cornice, which projects from 0.01 m. to 0.06 m., and consists simply of a concave moulding 0.46 m. in width. From here to the top (0.60 m.) the wall does not differ in appearance from ordinary *opus incertum*, as the term is used in Greece. On the south side the wall is rough and without any suggestion of ornament down to within 1.08 m. of the top, where the imprint of the boards of the framework begins to appear.

This wall is intersected at right angles by a similar wall running along the west side of the trench. It also makes a right angle with the buttress-wall.¹ The width of this wall is 0.80 m., the length, as far as excavated, 9.70 m. It lies beneath 0.75 m. to 1.20 m. of earth, with its top on a level with that of the wall just described.

On the east side this wall looks very much like the preceding wall, the method of construction being the same. In the excavated portion the imprints of nine upright timbers were found, averaging about 0.075 m. in depth, and varying from 0.11 to 0.16 m. in width. The intervening spaces are from 0.65 to 1.30 m. in width. At the top of the timbers there is, at the south end of the trench, a rough ledge of plaster, 3.50 m. long, which projects, in some places, as much as 0.08 m. The tops of the timbers were covered with plaster, which, in the case of the second and sixth uprights, reckoned from the north, has remained after the withdrawal of the timbers. The arrangement of the timbers is shown in PLATE XXV (Elevation III). Traces of board framework are also apparent on the upper part of the wall, which is slightly concave. On the west side the wall was exposed to a depth of only a few centimetres, but sufficiently to reveal the fact that it was here faced with brick. In this respect it resembles some of the interior walls of the so-called Gymnasium of Hadrian, before referred to, which were faced with brick, and then covered with slabs of marble. (Cf. *Πρακτικά*, 1885, p. 21, pl. i.)

At the south end of this trench is a bit of concrete pavement or flooring about 1.50 m. \times 1.20 m. in extent, lying nearly on a level with the top of the wall at the west. Just northeast of it is a piece of poor mosaic on about the same level. At present its dimensions are about 1.70 m. \times 1.50 m., but some of it was destroyed by the workmen.

Next to be noticed are the drains or conduits. Of these there were found in the north part of the trench three of

¹ The angle was taken by Dr. Babbitt.

different sizes and different levels, but all having a general course and fall from south to north.

The lowest and largest drain or conduit, 4.60 m. beneath the present surface of the ground, may be seen at the north side of the third cross-wall, where it is partially preserved for a length of 3.40 m. It runs at right angles to this wall, which cuts through it, and is accordingly of later date. The width of this drain was not ascertained, as the west side of the trench is bounded at the bottom by the narrow drain which is next to be described. As the width must have exceeded the distance from the east edge to this smaller drain, or 0.85 m. (0.61 m. inside), it would appear to have been a somewhat broad water-course. The depth was 0.35 m., as may be seen from a portion of the east side still in position (length 1.80 m., width 0.24 m.).

This drain is constructed of soft white limestone, coated inside with plaster or cement about 0.02 m. in thickness. It rests upon a foundation of large, somewhat irregularly laid blocks of soft white limestone. This foundation deserves especial notice, because of the light which it sheds upon the question as to the age of the drains. It consists of a single course of stone, for the most part, with an extreme height of 0.53 m., resting upon a basis of loosely piled worked and unworked stone of various sizes and shapes, among which were also found pieces of brick. The height of this mass was not ascertained, owing to the difficulty of digging at so great a depth in a very confined space; but a small hole, east of the middle of the preserved piece of the side of the drain, was carried to a depth of 2.10 m. beneath the level of the drain without reaching the bottom of the heap (cf. PLATE XXV, Section II).

North of the second cross-wall this drain seems to have been broken up, but it is likely that the foundation remains in the shape of a loosely built wall of soft limestone, 0.75 m. to 1 m. wide, and over 1.17 m. high. This wall is, for the most part, constructed without mortar, but a few pieces of a soft brownish mortar were found.

Directly above this drain there is a small drain or conduit

falling from southwest to northeast. It makes its appearance at the north side of the third cross-wall, which evidently intercepted it, and continues with some interruptions through to the northeast corner of the trench. One of these interruptions is due to the second cross-wall, which is built through it. The depth of its course from the surface of the ground is about 4.35 m.

This drain is made of rectangular blocks of soft white limestone, 0.35 m. wide, and 0.32 m. to 0.39 m. high, set end to end. The channel for water is a rectangular groove, 0.12 m. to 0.24 m. wide, and 0.11 m. to 0.21 m. deep, cut lengthwise in the top of each stone, in such a way as to leave the lips at either side about equal in width. The bottom is covered with a coating of plaster 0.01 m. thick. Traces of calcareous deposit abound. Across the top were gable tiles about 0.05 m. thick.

Of the third drain a piece 2.15 m. in length remains between the first and second cross-walls. Its water-channel lies about 1.13 m. above that of the drain just described. The intervening space is filled with a mass of earth, loose stones, and pottery, differing little, if any, in character from the surrounding *χώμα*.

This drain is constructed in the same manner as the small drain just mentioned, and of the same kind of material. The channel for water is of about the same size, namely, 0.18 m. to 0.22 m. width, and 0.15 m. to 0.19 m. depth, but the stones of which the drain was constructed are much heavier, having a width of 0.49 m. and a height of 0.38 m. In the preserved section there are but two stones, one of which is 1.28 m. in length. The bottom of the channel is covered with a layer of plaster or cement 0.01 m. in thickness.

The two drains last described agree closely in appearance and construction with the drains of "grooved blocks of stone," which cross the orchestra of the theatre at Sicyon from northwest to southeast, and seem to fall toward the eastern corners of the so-called tank at its centre.¹

¹ Cf. Earle, *Papers of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens*, V, p. 23, *American Journal of Archaeology*, First Series, vol. VIII, p. 393, and Brownson and Young, *ibid.* p. 405.

That all these drains or conduits are older than the walls which cross them is evident from the fact that in every case the drains have been broken through and no provision made for their continuance. On the other hand, the fact that the foundation of the lowest drain seems to be constructed with the aid of mortar, and is built across a heap of used and refuse stone and brick, may possibly indicate a period subsequent to the destruction of the city in 146 B.C. We have as yet no means of ascertaining by how long a time the uppermost drain antedates the building to which the outer and inner walls, which have been described, belonged. But that that building must belong to a considerably later period than the lowest drain is shown by the accretion of earth between the upper drains, as well as by the mere fact of their existence. We have already pointed out certain similarities in construction between our building and some works of the age of Hadrian, and it is to be said that the style of the edifice and the general character of the workmanship suggest that epoch. A more definite statement than this would be unwise until a more complete and comprehensive excavation can be made.

An effort should then be made to find out also the original design and purpose of the structure, to which belongs a mass of Roman brick-work and *opus incertum*, commencing about 33 m. south of the buttress-wall and extending south for about 20 m. farther, while in the field to the southwest are several detached and partially destroyed pieces of vaulting. The most conspicuous part of this ruin is a wall 12.80 m. long, 2 m. wide, and 6.15 m. high, with two vaulted chambers attached at the northeast. These vaults are of unequal height, the higher being next to the wall, but are joined under one roof, which slopes upward to the wall, meeting it at a height of about 4 m. from the ground. The wall runs from northwest to southeast, as do also the pieces of vaulting in the field at the southwest. The remains, however, which lie east and northeast of the wall, have the same orientation as the other walls which have been described.

These ruins appear to have been as insignificant in the time of the visit of Spon and Wheler (1676) as they are to-day, that is, if one may judge from the scanty and uncertain reference to them in the description of the journey of these travellers.¹ Of the other travellers, Chandler² speaks of a large mass of brick-work north of the bazaar, "a remnant, it may be conjectured, of a bath or of the gymnasium." Leake³ conjectures that the ruin may be "part of one of the baths built by Hadrian," while Beulé⁴ identifies it either with the baths of Hadrian or of Eurycles. Both of these baths are mentioned by Pausanias (II, 3, 5), who says that, of the many baths at Corinth, that built by Eurycles⁵ the Spartan was most famous. It lay, according to that author, on or near the direct road from the *agora* to Lechaeum.

It seems very probable that these ruins are a part of the building, to which the buttress-wall, and its adjacent interior foundation walls of *opus incertum* and brick, belong. If so, the identification of this extensive edifice with either of the above-mentioned structures would be an important contribution to our knowledge of the topography of Corinth.

HERBERT F. DE COU.

ATHENS,
July 7, 1897.

¹ "Voilà toutes les antiquitez qui se trouvent à Corinthe, avec quelques paus de murailles." *Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce et du Levant*, vol. II, p. 306.

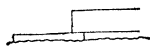
² *Travels in Asia Minor and Greece*, vol. II, p. 295.

³ *Travels in the Morea*, vol. III, p. 244.

⁴ *Études sur le Péloponnèse*, p. 400. Cf. Dodwell, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece*, vol. II, p. 192; E. D. Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia, and Africa*, part II, vol. VI, p. 558; W. G. Clark, *Peloponnesus*, p. 55.

⁵ On Eurycles, who lived in the reign of Augustus, see the references in Pape-Benseler, s.v., and Leake, *op. cit.* p. 239, note b.

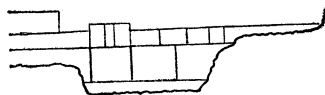
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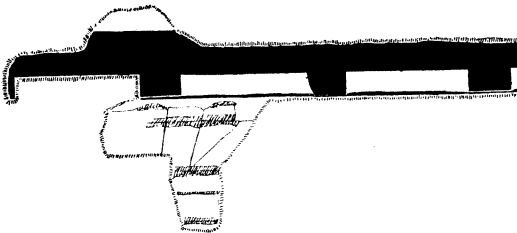
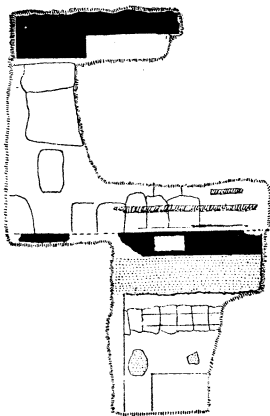
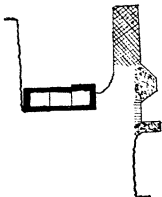
Elevation III



Elevation II



Section I.



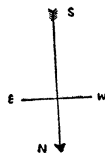
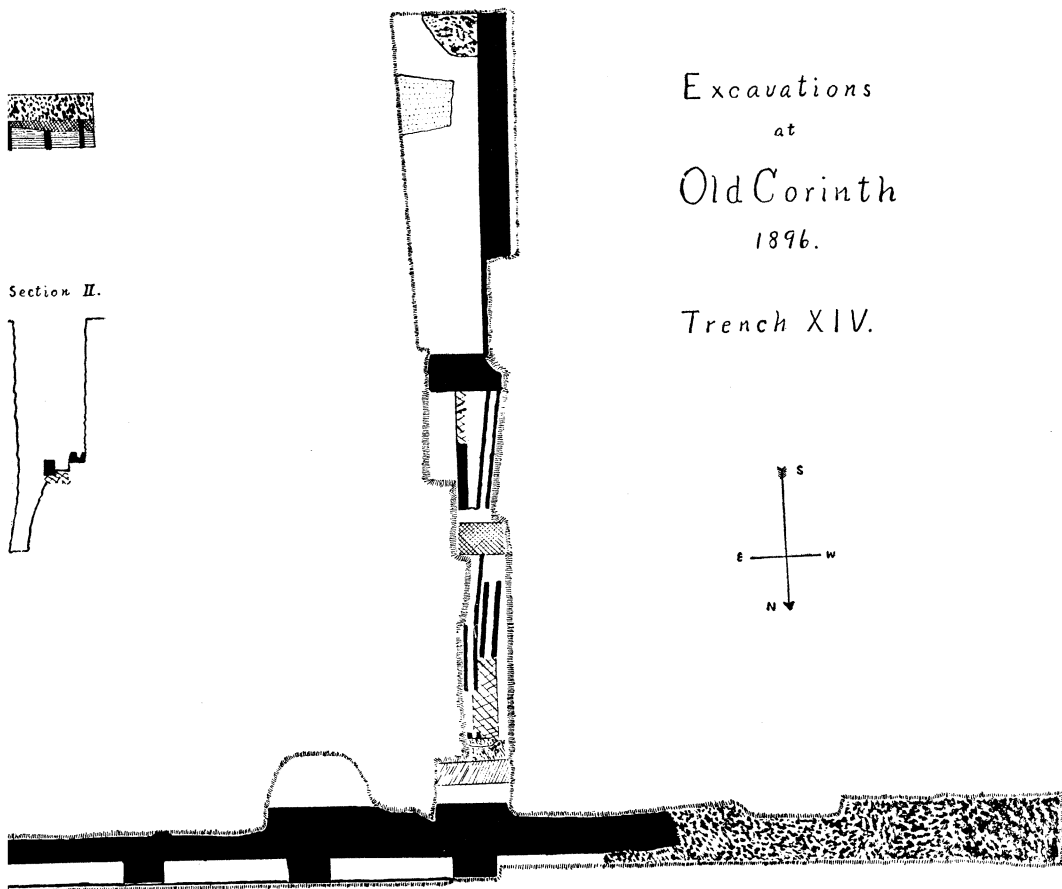
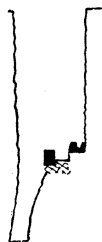
A ROMAN BUILDING
Plan, Elevations, and Section

Excavations
at
Old Corinth
1896.

Trench XIV.



Section II.



Scale 1:100
Drawn by H. F. De Cou



A ROMAN BUILDING AT CORINTH

Trench XIV: looking west